

Landfill Cap Project Begins this Fall

West KL Avenue Landfill Superfund Site

Kalamazoo, Michigan

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If you need more information

These EPA representatives can answer questions or provide more details about the West KL Avenue Landfill cap project:

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www.epa.gov/region5/sites/westklavenue/index.htm

Preparation work for the building of a new cap over the West KL Avenue Landfill should begin this September, but the bulk of the work won't happen until next spring, according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5. The work this fall includes establishing erosion controls, grading soil on the site and installing landfill vents. The fall portion of the work will not require soil shipments so truck traffic will be limited to delivering construction equipment and materials.

During cap construction, safety of workers and residents will be a primary concern. Dust, air quality and odor controls will be enforced, truck traffic will be minimized and traffic safety measures will be established in cooperation with the Kalamazoo County Road Commission. The cleanup contractor under the oversight of EPA will be responsible for continuous air quality monitoring in and around the landfill to ensure excessive dust and odors are not released. The majority of existing trees and vegetation that form a visual barrier to the landfill along KL Avenue will also be preserved during cap construction.

EPA proposed construction of a new cap over 61 acres of the 87-acre landfill to promote cleanup of the fresh water flowing underneath. This underground water supply, called "ground water," is being polluted by rain and snow melt seeping through the landfill and picking up contaminants buried there. A mass or "plume" of polluted ground water was discovered flowing west from the landfill and threatening the drinking water wells of dozens of homes. A group of parties responsible for the landfill agreed to pay for connecting the homes to Kalamazoo city water. Closing the threatened private wells and using municipal water eliminated the health risks from the pollution to people living west of the landfill. The new landfill cap is another part of the cleanup process. It replaces the existing soil-only cover and will stop more pollution from contaminating the ground water and enlarging the plume. Monitoring wells set up west of the landfill will check the effectiveness of the new cap in halting the spread of polluted underground water. After the pollution source is stopped by the cap, natural processes such as evaporation, dilution and decay will eventually clean up the contaminated ground-water plume.

Cap work will restart in spring

Construction work at the landfill will be suspended for the winter when adverse weather hits the area, probably in late fall. Over the winter, the site will be monitored weekly and after major storms to make sure erosion controls remain intact. Work is expected to pick up again in mid-spring with the installation of the actual cap. The multi-layer cap will include a thick plastic liner, a sandwich of two flexible plastic sheets sewn over a layer of clay-like material and two feet of soil planted with grass. Surface water

on the landfill will be managed by the construction of berms, channels, culverts and a stormwater basin.


Cap construction next spring will require moving in soil from an area next to the landfill. Around 8 to 9 acres of a 57-acre parcel (not visible from KL Avenue) will be dug up and moved to the landfill. The excavation area will then be graded and replanted with vegetation. The integrity of the new landfill cap will be inspected and maintained on a regular basis. A perimeter fence restricting access to the landfill will also be repaired as needed. After the pollution is contained and cleaned up, Oshtemo Township officials hope the landfill will eventually become a recreation area.

During design of the new cap, EPA and its state partner, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, along with a group of financially responsible parties called the KLA Group, were able to reduce the needed soil excavation from 650,000 cubic yards to 200,000 cubic yards. The final cap will have a more natural slope and improved appearance than the original design, and the lower soil volume requires much less truck traffic.

Read the documents

EPA has established a West KL Avenue Landfill information file at the Oshtemo Branch of the Kalamazoo Public Library. The file contains specific information related to the site and general information about the Superfund cleanup process.

Kalamazoo Public Library
Oshtemo Branch
7265 W. Main St.

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